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Ontario

Ontario Women's Directorate

NEWS RELEASE

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ABORIGINAL WOMEN LEADERS RECOGNIZED FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THEIR COMMUNITIES

Ontario Government Presents "Leading Women, Building Communities Award"

TORONTO – The Ontario government is celebrating the achievements of Aboriginal women by recognizing three Aboriginal leaders with the "Leading Women, Building Communities Award," Sandra Pupatello, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues announced today.

"We're recognizing and paying tribute to Aboriginal women who have made significant achievements in areas of culture, law, public health and social change," said Minister Pupatello. "Their hard work, vision and leadership are an inspiration to all women."

The three award recipients are:

- Elder Lillian McGregor D.D.L., a member of the Whitefish River First Nation, Birch Island and Elder for Ontario's Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy
- Madam Justice Rose Boyko, a Tsek' ehne woman from McLeod Lake, British Columbia and the first Aboriginal woman to be appointed to a superior court in Canada in 1994
- Sylvia Maracle, from the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territories and Executive Director of the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres.

The "Leading Women, Building Communities Award" was launched on March 8, 2006 to celebrate the exceptional leadership qualities of women who improve the lives of women and girls in their communities. These awards were presented to mark both Women's History Month and Persons Day, an annual commemoration of the 1929 British Privy Council ruling that recognized Canadian women as persons under the law.

"This year's Women's History Month theme recognizes the positive efforts made by Aboriginal women to make their communities stronger," said Minister Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs David Ramsay. "Our government

Sandra Pupatello, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, joined by David Ramsay, Minister Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs celebrate the outstanding community leadership of three Aboriginal women: The Honourable Madam Justice Rose Boyko (left), Elder Lillian McGregor D.D.L. (center), and Sylvia Maracle (right). These women received the *Leading Women, Building Communities Award*, the Ontario government's first award to recognize the exceptional leadership qualities of women.

continues to support the hard work of Aboriginal people and applauds their successes."

Other Ontario government investments that support Aboriginal women include:

- $500,000 over four years to support family violence prevention training in Aboriginal communities in Northwestern Ontario;
- more than $400,000 to train Aboriginal women for careers in skilled trades; and
- $25 million over five years in the Aboriginal Healing and Wellness Strategy.

- 30 -

Contacts:
Danna O'Brien, Minister's Office, (416) 325-7569
Karen Ras, Communications Branch, (416) 314-7012

- **Backgrounder:** Leading Women, Building Communities Award

Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, Sandra Pupatello at the *Leading Women, Building Communities Award* ceremony to recognize the achievements of women leaders.

Sandra Pupatello, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues at the awards ceremony for *Leading Women, Building Communities*. She was joined by David Ramsay, Minister Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs; award recipients (front row, left to right), The Honourable Madam Justice Rose Boyko, Elder Lillian McGregor D.D.L., and Sylvia Maracle; Aboriginal singing group (back row, left to right), Women of Wabano, Allison Fisher and Beverly Souliere; the Emcee of the event, Carla Robinson from the CBC; and and Carlie Chase from Women of Wabano.

TOP

| Ontario Women's Directorate | About the OWD | News Releases | Facts and Statistics | How to Reach Us | Publications and Resources | A Guide to Government Services For Women | Related Sites | Grants | FAQ | Text Version |

| central site | feedback | search | site map | français |

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